

COUNCIL ANNETTE ISLANDS RESERVE

METLAKATLA INDIAN COMMUNITY

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Country of Origin Food Labeling Program
Room 2092-S
Agricultural Marketing Service USDA Stop 0249
Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-0249
202-720-3499

Re: Docket LS-03-04

I am writing on behalf of the Metlakatla Indian Community, a federally recognized Indian tribe, and home to a hard-working fishing fleet. We've learned that the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, and related legislation, requires retailers to notify their customers of the country of origin of covered commodities including wild fish. Salmon fishing is a critical part of our Community's economy and we support country of origin labeling for salmon in all product forms.

We understand the Department of Agriculture's proposed regulations to implement the foregoing law would exclude smoked salmon and products derived from salmon when combined with other ingredients. These products are excluded because they are "processed" food items.

We believe that salmon in all product forms should be included under the Act. Moreover, we know that consumers prefer domestic wild salmon to imports and our Community fishermen would benefit from country of origin labels for their catch. Thus, including products such as smoked salmon and other products would have the dual benefit of protecting the supplier and the consumer. We request the draft regulations be amended accordingly.

Thank you.

Metlakatla Indian Community


Victor C. Wellington, Mayor